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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

INFORMATION ON NEWLY DISCOVERED URANIUM, LEAD,
CHROMIUM, AND PETROLEUM DEPOSITS IN BULGARIA

Uranium

It appears that uranium deposits have been found in the village of Stude-
dona, near Sofia, near the village of Buta, near Panagyurishte, in the Sredna
Gora (Central Mountain), as well as in a locality which does not have a name
but is on the northern side of the Rhodope Mountains. It appears that the
last is a most important discovery, as the uranium found there can be compared
in quality and quantity to that of the Belgian Congo. It is reported that
the Ministry of Mines and Underground Resources has allotted 5 billion leva
for preliminary construction at this particular mine; this confirms the impor-
tance of the deposit.

Four new uranium veins are reported to have been discovered in the Buk-
hovo mine near Sofia. The mine is most important to the Soviets, who are ex-
ploiting it in accordance with the peace treaty. This property was formerly
owned by the Germans.

Lead

Apparently two important lead deposits have been discovered, one in the
Kazanluk region and the other 30 kilometers from Pamporovo in the Rhodope
Mountains.

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Chromium

A vein of chromium, of a quality similar to Turkish chromium, has apparently been discovered in a section of the Rhodope Mountains. It is also said that some special roads are being constructed to reach this vein.

The present regime has been the first to create a Bulgarian Ministry of Mines and has greatly intensified mine explorations, which had been completely abandoned before the war. Large sums of money have been allocated for mine exploitation, but without much publicity.

As a matter of fact, Bulgarian leaders are very reticent in these matters. The only indication that I have relative to these explorations comes from a speech made on 20 September 1948 by the late Vice-President of the Council, Traycho Kostov, at a meeting held to study the possibility of economic recovery for the Rhodope region. He said:

"One of the means of economic development of the Rhodope region is the mining industry, which plays a considerable role in our exports. We can say that lead, after tobacco, is most in demand on foreign markets. Bulgarian mineral wealth is beginning to assume a more important role in our economy every day, and this role will grow in importance in the future. It is becoming clearer that the Rhodope Mountains are our most valuable source of minerals. At this very moment, we are studying intensively the underground wealth of the Rhodope Mountains. We have every reason to believe that we shall discover new and very valuable veins."

Thus, new mines will be opened and productive work will begin. New towns, which at present do not appear on the map of the republic, will spring up around the mines.

Petroleum

Four petroleum deposits are reported to have been found at Shabla, Balchik Okoliya, at Provadiya, at the Chayka airport near Stalin, and at an unknown location near Burgas.

These four deposits, all on the shore of the Black Sea, tend to confirm the theory that the Ploesti oil deposits continue under the Black Sea and extend to the Caucasus.

Apparently the exploitation of these four sources of petroleum has not begun and the wells have been sealed and camouflaged. The official explanation given to those employees of the Ministry of Mines who know of their existence is that, according to Soviet experts, the level of the Batumi petroleum would become lower if operations were to start in Bulgaria.

The officials of the ministry do not believe this explanation. They believe that exploitation is not under way either because of a lack of capital, or because the Bulgarian leaders fear an Allied landing in Bulgaria in case of war. In such an event, the enemy would have easy access to important petroleum sources.

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